

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-05 CIAE-00 COME-00
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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8475
INFO AMCONSUL CALGARY
AMCONSUL HALIFAX
AMCONSUL MONTREAL
AMCONSUL QUEBEC
AMCONSUL TORONTO
AMCONSUL VANCOUVER
AMCONSUL WINNIPEG

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAIR, ELAB, CA
SUBJECT: AIR CANADA GROUND CREWS STRIKE

REF: OTTAWA 4187

1. WILDCAT STRIKES BY THE GROUND CREWS SERVICING AIR CANADA (AC) FLIGHTS BEGAN YESTERDAY, AUG. 24, IN MONTREAL, OTTAWA, HALIFAX, VANCOUVER, CALGARY AND EDMONTON AFTER A SLIGHT MAJORITY OF WORKERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY VOTED TO REJECT THE COMPANY'S LAST OFFER AND TO LEGALLY STRIKE IN SUPPORT OF THEIR DEMANDS. THE NATIONAL NEGOTIATORS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MACHINISTS AND AEROSPACE WORKERS (IAM) RECOMMENDED ACCEPTANCE OF THE LAST COMPANY OFFER, BUT LOCAL UNION LEADERS RECOMMENDED REJECTION. AS A RESULT OF THESE IAM WORK STOPPAGES, JUST HOURS AFTER THE CANADIAN AIRLINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION AND AC HAD TENTATIVELY AGREED TO THEIR CONTRACT TERMS, THE COMPANY DECIDED TO

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CLOSE DOWN FLIGHT OPERATIONS. AN IAM UNION SPOKESMAN SAID THAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH AC WILL RESUME AT 1400 HOURS, AUG. 26, IN MONTREAL, IN AN ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE THE ISSUES.

2. THE COMPANY HAD OFFERED A TOTAL INCREASE OF 16 PERCENT OVER 25 MONTHS, WHILE THE UNION HAS ASKED FOR AN 18 PERCENT INCREASE OVER 18 MONTHS. APPARENTLY, WORKING CONDI-

TIONS AND DISCIPLINARY RULES ARE MORE A BONE OF CONTENTION WITH SEVERAL OF THE LOCAL UNIONS THAN ARE WAGES.

3. SENIOR AIR TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL TOLD US THAT SCHEDULE OF NEW TALKS AND ANOTHER VOTE BY IAM MEMBERS COULD MEAN THAT SERVICES MAY NOT BE RESUMED UNTIL MIDDLE OF NEXT WEEK. IF THAT IS THE OUTCOME, HE SUGGESTED PARLIAMENT COULD BE RECALLED BY THAT TIME TO BRING IN EMERGENCY LEGISLATION FORCING WORKERS TO RETURN TO WORK TO GET AIRLINE BACK INTO OPERATION.

4. COMMENT: THE IAM HAS LOST DISCIPLINE IN BARGAINING WHICH MAY RESULT IN A COMPANY DECISION TO NEGOTIATE SEPARATELY WITH EACH LOCAL UNION IN A RETALIATORY MANNER. SUSPENSION OF WORKERS MAY FOLLOW. WHILE THE UNION IS WITHIN ITS LEGAL RIGHTS TO STRIKE, SO TOO IS THE COMPANY WITHIN ITS RIGHTS TO SUSPEND WORK AND WORKERS. THE COMPANY, A CROWN CORPORATION, AS MENTIONED ABOVE, MAY SEEK PARLIAMETARY RESTRAINTS ON THE RIGHT TO STRIKE BY PUBLIC SERVICE INDUSTRIES. A FEW LOCAL UNION LEADERS MAY CARRY THE DAY FOR A FEW MEMBERS BUT IN THE END OTHER UNIONS AND THOUSANDS OF WORKERS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE INDUSTRIES MAY BE AFFECTED BY THEIR ACTIONS. PLACKE

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